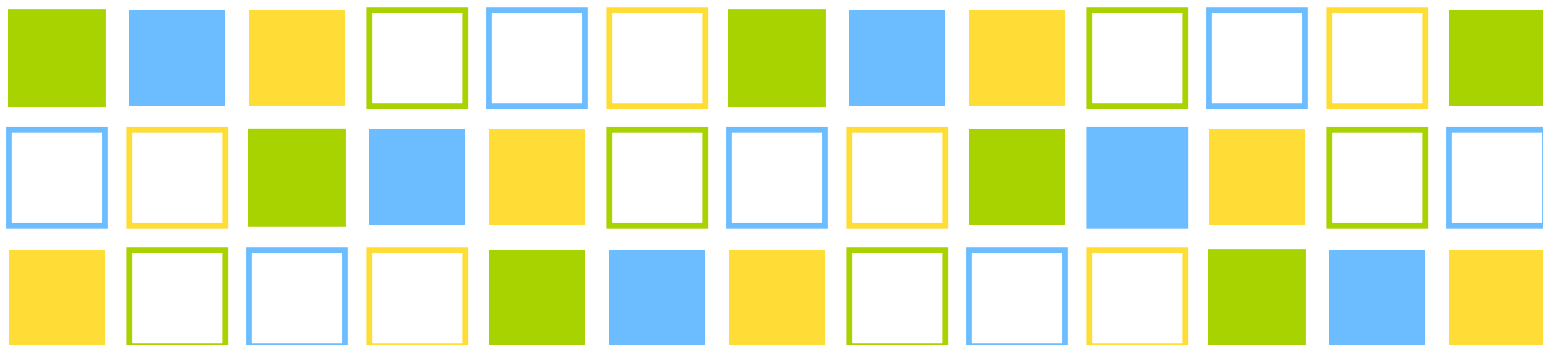


Chlamydia Screening



Chlamydia is a bacterial infection of the genital tract that spreads easily through sexual contact. You may not know you have Chlamydia because the signs and symptoms don't show up right away, if they show up at all.

Chlamydia is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases in the United States. Each year, an estimated 4 million people in the United States are infected with Chlamydia. The disease affects both men and women and occurs in all age groups, though is most prevalent among teenagers.

Chlamydia isn't difficult to treat once you know you have it. If it's left untreated, however, it can lead to more-serious health problems.

Symptoms and Screening

About 75% of infections in women and 50% in men are without symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they are usually noticeable within 1-3 weeks of contact and might include the following:

In women: Abnormal vaginal discharge that may have an odor, bleeding between periods, painful periods, abdominal pain with fever, pain when having sex, itching or burning around the vagina and/or pain when urinating.

In men: Small amounts of clear or cloudy discharge from the tip of the penis, painful urination, burning and itching around the opening of the penis and /or pain and swelling around the testicles.

Sexually active adolescents and women ages 16-24 years old be tested for Chlamydia **every** year. Women over 25 with high-risk sexual behaviors and all pregnant women should also be tested.

Testing and Treatment

Screening and diagnosis of Chlamydia is simple.

- **A swab.** For women, your doctor may take a swab of the discharge from your cervix for culture or antigen testing for Chlamydia. This can be done at the same time your doctor does a routine Pap test. For men, your doctor may insert a slim swab into the end of your penis to get a sample from the urethra. In some cases, your doctor may also swab the anus to test for the presence of Chlamydia.
- **A urine test.** A sample of your urine analyzed in the laboratory may indicate the presence of Chlamydia

Doctors typically treat Chlamydia with prescription antibiotics such as azithromycin (Zithromax), doxycycline or erythromycin. In most cases, the infection resolves within one to two weeks. During that time you should abstain from sex.

Your sexual partner or partners also need treatment even though they may not have signs or symptoms. This is important because the infection can be passed back and forth. It is possible to be re-infected with Chlamydia.

Not having sex (abstinence) is the only surefire way to fully protect your self against a sexually transmitted disease (STD). However, if you've decided to be sexually active use a female or latex condom every time you have vaginal or anal intercourse unless you're in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner. Plan annual Chlamydia screening to stay healthy.